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Good morning. Thank you for taking the time to hear us all this morning.

My name is Alison Cunningham and I am the Executive Director of Columbus House in New Haven. We serve people who are homeless through shelter, housing and case management services. We have over 100 people now housed in permanent supportive housing.

I am delighted to be here in support of Raised Bill No. 405. We can talk about all the ways we want to end homelessness, and we can make endless plans to do so, but without housing for the most disenfranchised people who are homeless, we will never come close to that goal. This bill gives yet one more avenue to provide housing for those who so desperately need it.

We know that permanent supportive housing works, and works for this particular population. I can give you story after story of people who we have helped move directly from the streets into their own apartment and suddenly, their entire life changes. Yes, we have taken chances on people who have lived on the streets for years, who have lived with chronic substance abuse, who would never step foot into a shelter. At Legion Woods, which is one of our three permanent supportive housing sites, there are several clients who are now sober, who are either working or in job training programs and who live successfully among their peers. I can tell you about Daryl who was in and out of shelters for over ten years, who was in and out of the hospital for most of those ten years due to his seizure disorders, who was declared dead by his family because they lost track of him during that entire period. Today he has lived at Cedar Hill for ten years, has only been hospitalized twice since he moved in, has reunited with his family, and is employed part-time. In fact, he has been employed since he moved in.

There are all kinds of similar stories but the bottom line is this: permanent supportive housing is cost effective, creating substantial savings by reducing the use of expensive emergency services. Daryl's health needs are now taken care of in regular visits to his doctor, not in emergency room visits. Thanks to the support of the on-site case managers, tenants have the assistance they need to sustain their recovery, maintain their housing, and make use of mainstream services available throughout the community.

This proposed legislation has come at a critical moment, when the number of people who are homeless is rising and when we know that funding for housing development is stalled. This

proposed legislation provides a cost effective way to provide the much needed housing for people who would otherwise be stuck in shelters or on the streets.

Thank you again for hearing us all this morning. I am hopeful that this bill will be met with enthusiasm and support as it moves toward passage.